

**Gage County EMS Advisory Committee  
Beatrice, Nebraska**

**March 12, 2009**

**Minutes**

**Present:**

Don Harmon  
Dan Hawkins  
Gary Williams  
Mark Meints  
Jane Witthoff  
Brian Daake  
Ron Miller  
Matt Bauman  
Gary Williams  
Rex Adams

**Absent:**

Dawn Hill  
Alan Fetty  
Dee Fritch  
Dennis Byars  
Larry Stanosheck

**Staff Resources:**

Robyn Henderson  
Dean Cole  
Richard Mettler

**Guests:**

Jill Jensen  
Jason Schmale

**Call Meeting to Order**

Don Harmon called the meeting to order and asked members to introduce themselves.

**Approve Minutes**

Motion made and seconded to accept agenda and minutes as corrected, motion approved.

Corrections: delete sentence regarding Adams filing

Change comment about March 25th to clarify about Contracts

Change language on Beatrice Rural from “ambulance” to basic life support/non-transport

**Review Committee Charter**

It was agreed to take this up at the next meeting.

**Physician Medical Director Update**

Dr. Rice was unable to attend due to clinic demands. Don Rice provided a summary on his behalf. Station audits are done with exception of Odell and Pickerell, which will be done later in March.

Cortland is considering a change to their license to ALS non-transport. This would allow ALS cooperative care with Clatonia after hours. A meeting is set with Cortland, Clatonia, and Adams for later in March.

Dr. Rice looked at data for Beatrice Community Hospital transfers to Lincoln and other hospitals over past 14 months. During this time Beatrice Fire & Rescue responded to 205 emergency patients. All 205 were transferred to outside hospitals in less than 24 hours. The report then focused on Cardiac (36 transfers) and traumatic brain injury (40 transfers). The average lapsed time between ambulance arrival at Beatrice Community Hospital to arrival at the outside hospital is 204 minutes. Based on this data, Dr. Rice believes it is important to develop medical bypass transport. He will continue to work with BCH and others on this topic.

## **Legal Update**

Jill Jensen provided a handout that discussed options available to Gage County. Hospital districts/authority are not that helpful. A better way to go is Rural or Suburban fire districts. State law says fire districts are under county lid.

Option 1 is status quo - extra 5cents allowed, but is already being used in inter-local agreement.

Option 2 – Joint Public Agency - governing board is elected by each partnering entity; and can form “public safety commission” that has a bit more flexibility

Option 3 – Merger of Fire Districts within Gage County through annexation. For example, York and Saline counties have one fire department.

Jill will check on use of transfer tax for EMS

## **Other Business – Contracts with County**

Contracts are open for discussion at March 25th County Board meeting. Matt thinks that ALL contracts with county will be opened up for discussion in the future.

Last year the deadline to open the contracts was missed. Contracts allow for 2.5 percent automatic increase. The County is running out of money just like anybody else and there could be cuts. Matt was not supportive of any new taxing authority, or asking the people to support more financing.

County is talking about subsidy usage. If departments can realize cost savings through centralized billing, quality changes, the subsidy then could be used to support things like paramedic training, etc. Centralized billing has a lot of opportunities and could help recoup lost funding.

Funding for medical director will be continued – right now it is a match with some state dollars. Dr. Rice thinks position will not require the \$40,000 salary as originally discussed.

Matt stated that one thing missing from contracts is the “accountability” portion. Contract needs to require all departments to submit budgets, require all departments to use eNarsis, require all to use county medical director

Matt said there is a bit of an urgency within Board to see things move.

## **Discussion on Options presented by Jill:**

Group agreed that for right now, Option 3 is not on the table; there are too many turf issues. Ron Miller noted that Option 2 is a more formal structure.

For the report to the county board, information needs to be in bullet point format and TELL the board what needs to be done.

Matt and Rex agreed that this committee doesn't need to worry about funding mechanism; Matt and Rex will “defend” that. This committee needs to focus on quality and were urged to set

short term goals that lead to long-term goal. This committee has the opportunity right now to make recommendations to Board on what should be in the contract.

Meeting on March 25th – hearing on opening contracts – don't expect to last more than 10 minutes. Fire Districts concerned that county will eliminate funding for EMS.

### **Additions to new Contracts**

- Centralized billing
- Medical director
- Submit budgets – be part of annual report
- Require eNarsis
- Required reports to board – quarterly-paper submission; yearly in person
- Claytonia subsidizes Cortland; Wymore subsidizes Barneston – this needs to be worked out and should do regular contracts. Cortland, Barneston, Odell – first responder units

**NOW:** Points for Open Contracts – focus on quality: (suggestions from Committee on 3/25)  
Start with Statement of Intent, then

1. Use of eNarsis
2. Single PMD
  - If use subsidy funding, department must be subject to county-wide PMD
  - Must comply with PMD regarding clinical oversight as per state statute
3. Budget and expenditures
4. Written annual report – face-to-face presentation too
  - Develop list of content required for the annual report
5. Continued financial support for EMS services in the county

### **Future considerations:**

1. Centralized billing
2. Joint purchasing
3. EMS authority board
  - Development of performance-based standards

### **Option 1 Questions for Jill**

- Register of Deeds transfer tax – funding for EMS
- Provision for an Oversight group – provide authority
- Statutory support for oversight group authority
- Find other county examples of this type of agreement, specifically EMS or something closely related.
- Contracts with non-gage county services: Diller, Hallam, Dewitt, Firth – how continue affiliation?
- Clearly spell out that there is no taxing authority - board is advisory only
- Shared fiscal responsibility in addition to operational authority
- Need a more detailed description of option (jill do)
- Clear process of appointment for membership on EMS authority board
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## **Option 2 Questions for Jill**

JPA requires elected official to be member of board – county board rep – etc.

- If rescue group is not part of the city, how do they participate?  
(Adams not related to city)
- Concern raised about the EMS Authority being elected officials
  
- Register of Deeds transfer tax – funding for EMS
- Provision for an Oversight group – provide authority
- Statutory support for oversight group authority
- Find other county examples of this type of agreement, specifically EMS or something closely related.
- Contracts with non-gage county services: Diller, Hallam, Dewitt, Firth – how continue affiliation?
- Clearly spell out that there is no taxing authority - board is advisory only
- Shared fiscal responsibility in addition to operational authority
- Need a more detailed description of option (jill do)
- Clear process of appointment for membership on EMS authority board
- Some Joint entity

### **Next steps:**

SE-AHEC post minutes on our website – county link to us

Urge folks to be at April 9

Review charter

Anything new from County Board

Grants for helipads – Dr. Rice should coordinate through county (he is responsible to the county)

Gary Williams is resigning from the Hospital; he is going to Santa Fe to help his daughter and will be CEO of local health facility. Suggestion was made to have EMS Nurse Director Diane Durfey replace him on the committee. Rex will need to make the appointment.

**With no other business, meeting adjourned.**

### **Next meetings:**

May 14, 2009

June 11, 2009

July 9, 2009

August 13, 2009